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**REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOUTH-SOUTH  
COOPERATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR RENEWED INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**Virtual meeting, 19–20 August 2021**

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## **A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

### **Place and date of the meeting**

1. The Committee on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean held its extraordinary meeting virtually on 19 and 20 August 2021. The extraordinary meeting was held pursuant to resolution 749(XXXVIII), adopted at the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC, by which the countries requested the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to convene, with the support of the secretariat, an extraordinary meeting of the Committee, outside the framework of the session of the Commission, as soon as possible and no later than the second half of 2021, in order to examine ways to enhance its functioning, including the need for institutional changes, with a view to providing recommendations to the Commission on these deliberations.

### **Attendance<sup>1</sup>**

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and Uruguay.

3. The following associate members of the Commission were also represented: Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat.

4. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat were the Resident Coordinators and representatives of the Offices of the Resident Coordinators, the Development Coordination Office, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS).

5. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the meeting: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), World Food Programme (WFP) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

6. The following intergovernmental organizations also participated: Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA).

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<sup>1</sup> See annex 3.

### **Chair and Vice-Chairs**

7. At the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC, the countries listed below were elected to serve as the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean:

Chair: Costa Rica

Vice-Chairs: Argentina, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru

### **B. AGENDA**

8. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Presentation of the note by the secretariat entitled “From the Committee on South-South Cooperation to the regional conference: opportunities for renewed international development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean”.
3. Multidimensional measurements of development: opportunities for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. Outcome of the twentieth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation of the United Nations (1–4 June 2021).
5. Dialogue of ministers of foreign affairs on opportunities and challenges of international development cooperation in the context of the health, economic and social recovery post- COVID-19.
6. Adoption of agreements.

### **C. PROCEEDINGS**

9. At the opening session, statements were made by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC.

10. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that international cooperation was a driving force for economic and social progress in many countries and that, when those responsible for cooperation in the region met, they had to imagine expeditious and effective channels for dealing with events such as the earthquake that had struck Haiti a few days earlier. ECLAC had already placed all its capacity and experience at the country’s disposal. Next, she said that the world was experiencing times of great uncertainty, with sporadic restrictions on mobility, asymmetries in the stimulus packages implemented by developed and developing economies, highly unequal access to vaccines, geopolitical tensions and

structural gaps of insufficient growth, low productivity, high inequality, informality and poverty, and fragile health and social protection systems. Latin America and the Caribbean had been one of the hardest hit regions, in terms of both the number of infections and the decline in GDP and job losses, in addition to food insecurity, the deteriorating fiscal situation and high debt levels, as well as the increase in natural disasters, especially in the Caribbean, which was also leading to rating agency downgrades.

11. The time had come to reconsider the criteria for measuring and classifying development, request the suspension of the graduation of middle-income countries during the pandemic, move towards a multidimensional approach to measuring poverty and establish a multidimensional vulnerability index. In that regard, ECLAC had proposed five policy measures: (i) expand and redistribute liquidity from developed to developing countries; (ii) strengthen regional cooperation by improving the lending and response capacity of regional, subregional and national financing institutions; (iii) carry out institutional reform of the multilateral debt architecture; (iv) expand the toolbox of innovative instruments to improve debt repayment capacity and avoid debt distress; and (v) make liquidity and debt reduction measures part of a financing for development strategy to build forward better. Given the complex scenario facing the region, it had to strengthen its regional political and economic agreements, deepen intraregional cooperation and more actively promote a united voice on the world stage, and the Committee on South-South Cooperation played a fundamental role in that regard. She concluded by welcoming the opening of the meeting, which aimed to examine ways to improve the functioning of the Committee, including the need for institutional changes.

12. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, noted the importance of international cooperation, which had succeeded in averting the spectre of major armed conflicts in the second half of the twentieth century. He defined international cooperation as a kind of global compact, an ethical and civic commitment in the name of stability that required democratic environments in which rights were respected and that allowed growth which benefited the most vulnerable. However, no political or economic system had succeeded in addressing the underlying problem, namely poverty, a multidimensional phenomenon that could not be understood solely on the basis of economic indicators and that required a re-examination of the way it was measured and the criteria used to determine international cooperation. There was a downward trend in cooperation, affecting middle-income countries in particular, but while the contributions of the major donors were declining, a new manifestation of horizontal peer-to-peer solidarity was emerging, called South-South cooperation, in which countries were willing to share their knowledge and best practices.

13. The pandemic had been a reminder that, in a globalized world, everyone was interconnected, and Costa Rica, as Chair of the Committee, proposed moving forward with a new concept of measurement that would integrate the various factors affecting countries' development and highlight their vulnerabilities in order to address them with the corresponding urgency. That would not only foster a common narrative in multilateral spaces, but also better planning of international cooperation initiatives. In order to seek new spaces, assistance and partnerships, and to allow for more autonomous and effective action, the idea of an institutional transition from Committee on South-South Cooperation to a regional conference had been embraced. Finally, he said that the meeting was historic in that it provided an opportunity for the countries of the region to speak in unison about possible solutions to overcome inequalities and achieve higher levels of development, becoming advocates for a change in the paradigms of measurement and cooperation, with a view to achieving a human, green, inclusive and resilient recovery.

Presentation of the note by the secretariat entitled “From the Committee on South-South Cooperation to the regional conference: opportunities for renewed international development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean” (agenda item 2)

14. Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, introduced agenda item 2, recalling that, on 19 July, the secretariat had circulated the note entitled “From the Committee on South-South Cooperation to the regional conference: opportunities for renewed international development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean”. He said that one of the ways to strengthen the 2030 Agenda was through cooperation, and that, at the moment, the cooperation system was in transition. The new global context made it vital to strengthen institutional frameworks for cooperation in order to improve their effectiveness. It was a challenging task that required discussion and agreements to overcome the crisis and build forward better, towards a sustainable development model.

15. The presentation of the note by the secretariat entitled “From the Committee on South-South Cooperation to the regional conference: opportunities for renewed international development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean”<sup>2</sup> was made by Enrique Oviedo, Political Affairs Officer of the Office of the Secretary of the Commission, who referred to resolution 749(XXXVIII), adopted by the countries at the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC, which had requested the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Committee to examine ways to enhance its functioning, including the need for institutional changes. In that context, the Chair, Costa Rica, had requested the secretariat to prepare the note, which provided the historical background of the Committee and explained the different areas in which it worked to strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through South-South and triangular cooperation: strategic approaches, development agendas, joint work with other entities, sharing of technical experiences and knowledge, and studies and publications. There was also a need to strengthen the institutional architecture of South-South and triangular cooperation within the framework of renewed international development cooperation.

16. The speaker recalled the key role of the regional commissions in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation, and the centrality of the theme for Latin America and the Caribbean, and mentioned some changes from committee to conference that had taken place in the past. The proposed change was consistent with the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as it contributed to greater policy coherence and collaboration with the agencies, funds and programmes of the system in support of cooperation. It would also provide a more comprehensive follow-up to the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40). Lastly, he listed some of the many positive effects of a change from committee to conference: it would give the Committee a stronger identity; result in meetings independent of ECLAC sessions and independent Presiding Officers; allow decisions to be taken on substantive issues; allow meetings to have substantive discussion papers and a working agenda of more than one day; include all ECLAC members and operate within the framework of existing resources.

17. Next, the representative of Honduras said that the note presented by the secretariat clearly detailed the transition from the Committee on South-South Cooperation to the regional conference, as well as the manner in which it would function. The change would be very important to provide greater autonomy, reflect South-South cooperation more robustly and make the theme more central, and would also contribute to the harmonization of related regional policies and positions in multilateral bodies. She noted that it would also be important for the title of the conference to reflect the centrality of South-South cooperation.

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<sup>2</sup> LC/RECSS.2021/3/Rev.1.

18. The representative of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) said that the secretariat's presentation made clear the benefit of converting the Committee into a conference in order to renew and strengthen its activities and promote greater development cooperation among the countries of the region and with other regions of the world. She expressed the conviction that, given the impact of the pandemic on the region and the world, the time was ripe for such change, and that only through solidarity and international cooperation, the sharing of experiences and the strengthening of institutions would it be possible to find common solutions to build back better in an inclusive and sustainable manner, leaving no one behind. Finally, she took the opportunity to thank Brazil for its pertinent comments on the annex to the note by the secretariat, which had bolstered its content.

19. The representative of Argentina said that the note by the secretariat was appropriate because, in the current global context, mechanisms should be sought to strengthen the institutional framework for cooperation and improve its effectiveness. The change in the Committee's status would increase the priority given to the subject, allow more time for meetings and consensus-building, and give the body more autonomy. It would also allow the Presiding Officers to assume their own identity and to have more visibility and decision-making capacity at the regional and multilateral levels. The Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) had reaffirmed the fundamental role of United Nations system entities in promoting South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, and had urged the United Nations development system to continue supporting developing countries in terms of South-South and triangular cooperation. The regional commissions had also been recognized as key to advancing South-South and triangular cooperation. It was time to reconsider the criteria for measuring and classifying development, suspend the graduation of middle-income countries during the pandemic, move towards a multidimensional approach to measuring poverty and establish a multidimensional vulnerability index. In conclusion, she expressed Argentina's support for all proposals aimed at strengthening and deepening the role of South-South cooperation as a tool to build solid ties among the countries of the region and throughout the global South, in conditions of horizontality and mutual benefit that would enhance national capacities.

20. The Executive Director of the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI) said that international cooperation faced a complex scenario marked by the impact of the pandemic, which affected the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and intensified inequalities in the region. It was therefore necessary to strengthen multilateralism and empower regional bodies with clear mandates to promote cooperation initiatives to support countries' development efforts. It was also necessary to strengthen international cooperation bodies, gearing them towards results management, and to have coordination and follow-up channels that would make it possible to implement specific cooperation proposals for action. It was important to be able to generate value added and to give more fluidity and autonomy to the decision-making process and to the relationship between the different development actors. Finally, he expressed Peru's conviction that the initiative to change from Committee to a conference was geared towards those objectives and would serve to strengthen the South-South and triangular cooperation architecture, in line with the repositioning of the United Nations development system and the work of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). Therefore, he expressed his country's agreement with the initiative, which went beyond a change of name, as the conference should become a regional forum reflecting the importance of cooperation for countries' development.

21. The representative of Brazil first joined in the expressions of support for the people of Haiti, announcing that the President of Brazil had decided to send a multidisciplinary humanitarian mission to the country. Next, he said that Brazil understood that the main argument for the proposed change was to provide ECLAC member countries with a better instrument adapted to the current times so that the Commission could fulfil its original mandate to study and seek solutions to the problems arising in Latin America and

the Caribbean from world economic maladjustment and to problems related to the world economy, with a view to the cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the common effort to achieve worldwide recovery and economic stability (paragraph 2 of the 1948 United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution). Given that one of the consequences of the pandemic was the breakdown of economies around the world, that mandate was very contemporary and appropriate. Other topics of interest to member States could be addressed within the scope of the work of the future conference if they were in line with those terms of reference or with the mandates received under BAPA+40 and its specific activities in favour of South-South and triangular cooperation. At the thirty-eighth session of the Commission, the proponents of the aforementioned institutional transformation had stated that the new body would retain the same functions and budgetary composition as the Committee, aspects that Brazil considered central. Taking that aspect into account, and without prejudice to previous statements on the subject, Brazil would follow the consensus of the meeting on the proposed transformation. However, it was important for the documents to be adopted at the meeting to state that South-South and triangular cooperation would continue to be the central focus of the possible new regional conference on South-South cooperation, and that the title should convey that message to the general public. Finally, he noted that Brazil's suggestions for adjustments to the text of the agreements had been positively received and expressed the delegation's willingness to work under the leadership of the Chair to contribute to the proposal in a spirit of solidarity and constructiveness.

22. The representative of El Salvador said that everyone had an active role to play in South-South cooperation. Partnerships and knowledge would be strengthened when the Committee on South-South Cooperation was transformed into a conference. ECLAC did not only provide support to the countries in the area of South-South cooperation, but also in the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico, with major efforts by the United Nations, ECLAC and cooperation agencies. El Salvador would play an active role and was willing to contribute to South-South cooperation efforts.

23. The representative of Colombia said that his country agreed with the transformation of the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a conference because it would offer benefits such as greater autonomy and time for in-depth discussions on the region's broad cooperation agenda, using the ECLAC institutional framework and real and existing resources in a context of austerity and limitations faced by countries in the economic recovery period. However, clarity was needed on how the transformation would affect the type of cooperation pursued by the body, and consensus among the countries of the region was required in that regard. The inclusion of North-South cooperation in the Conference would call for a more comprehensive view (not just a nominal change) of other modalities of cooperation. The change would strengthen existing cooperation mechanisms at multilateral and other levels.

24. The representative of Paraguay said that the outcome of the current meeting would improve and strengthen the institutional framework for South-South cooperation in the region, which had an important role to play in the context of the current health, political and institutional crisis, the widening inequality gap and the collective challenges posed. Paraguay had received most of its vaccines through South-South cooperation mechanisms. The crisis should be an opportunity to fulfil the commitment to leave no one behind. Finally, she noted that her country supported the transformation of the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a conference.

25. The Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations underlined his country's deep attachment to the Commission and the Committee on South-South Cooperation. Barbados supported the institutional transformation proposed, which could further enhance South-South cooperation in the region when it was needed most, "building back better" in a post-COVID-19 world. His country had benefited from such cooperation, particularly through Cuba's Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade. In light of



Haiti's recent political, economic and environmental challenges, the region must use the tools of South-South cooperation to spearhead assistance and support, exemplifying the horizontal solidarity mentioned by the Chair. He commended the Executive Secretary's tireless efforts to shed light on the specific issues of middle-income countries and small island developing States (SIDS) and the Commission's work regarding the need for a vulnerability index and for new classification criteria, with a multidimensional approach to measuring poverty. He looked forward to member States' participation and support in the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 15), which Barbados would be hosting virtually.

26. The representative of Uruguay said that his country supported the transformation of the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a conference and welcomed the proposal contained in the ECLAC concept note. He also agreed with the concepts expressed. The institutional role of the future conference would be extremely important and would result in South-South and triangular cooperation efforts in a context of economic and social recovery in the region. International cooperation was important for the implementation of the SDGs. The pandemic had exposed structural gaps and vulnerabilities in countries such as Uruguay, which had been "graduated" using a per capita GDP development metric. There was need of a paradigm shift towards a transition to comprehensive and sustainable development and a new narrative of multidimensional measurement. His country joined the consensus to support the move from the Committee on South-South Cooperation to conference.

27. The representative of Chile said that his country endorsed the secretariat's proposal to move from Committee on South-South Cooperation to conference, which institutionalized the imperative of a regional position on cooperation in general terms, in an inclusive and non-exclusive manner. It set a significant precedent in conceptual, institutional and practical development, which coincided with Chile's idea of development cooperation.

28. The representative of Guyana, expressing appreciation for the secretariat's work, said that the proposal was timely given current challenges and with the world at a crossroads between a transformational shift and "business as usual". The dynamic solution reflected the Commission's innovation in leadership and could be replicated elsewhere. There was merit in the proposal, first, because given the nature of the Committee's mandate and the issues of which it was seized, its operating modalities were no longer adequate to satisfy the development trajectory in the region. The new arrangement would lead to clear, well-defined policy directives. Second, the region must respond effectively to multidimensional challenges, especially those arising from COVID-19 and the existential threat of the climate emergency. Increasingly dynamic and broad triangular and South-South cooperation would amplify demand for enhanced coordination, advocacy and partnerships; it was in the region's interest to strengthen efforts and institutions in that regard. Third, a conference would facilitate greater focus on policymaking specific to the region's realities while aligning with the 2030 Agenda. Regional actions must reflect national dynamics and space was needed to move forward in that direction. Guyana was committed to advancing South-South, North-South, triangular and multilateral cooperation in the region and would remain constructively engaged in the process.

29. The representative of Ecuador said that her country supported the proposed change from Committee on South-South Cooperation to conference and shared the view that the change would be positive for strengthening South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean and that establishing new cooperation mechanisms in middle-income countries was a challenge. Her country would support initiatives to influence work at the multilateral level to establish criteria that considered development a multidimensional process and not just an economic one.

30. The Director of the Economic Affairs Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica said that his country acknowledged the utility of the proposal, and associated itself with

the comments made by Guyana, Barbados and Ecuador on middle-income countries and the multidimensional measurement of vulnerability, the climate emergency and strengthening regional cooperation. Jamaica also appreciated Costa Rica's efforts to move up South-South and triangular cooperation in the hierarchy of support mechanisms available to member States, noting the timeliness of such a concrete proposal after BAPA +40. Full support with competent national resources would be indispensable for establishing South-South cooperation as a viable, positive and innovative mechanism and Jamaica looked forward to specific projects that would emerge from the process.

31. The Director of International Affairs (Cooperation) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belize, thanking ECLAC for the proposal and the Chair for its leadership, said that the time was right for the change to a conference and Belize welcomed the organic shift. Her country looked forward to supporting efforts for a seamless transition and would work closely with the conference, for which it had high expectations, to ensure that South-South cooperation would be given the utmost priority.

32. The regional representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO), acknowledging the support from and strong partnerships built in the region, reiterated the importance ILO attached to South-South cooperation and its endorsement of the principles such as respect for national sovereignty, equality, solidarity, non-conditionality and mutual benefit. Engagement in South-South cooperation was reflected through its tripartite structures in the identification and dissemination of good practices, peer-to-peer learning, knowledge-sharing through multi-stakeholder partnerships and various agreements. ILO leveraged the potential of South-South cooperation to advance its mandate embodied in the Decent Work Agenda and to build capacity, identify and implement cooperation opportunities by drawing on the experience of its tripartite constituencies—member States, workers and employers. Priorities with regional partners involved the promotion of the fundamental principles of work, such as abolishing child labour and forced labour, and other pressing issues arising from the pandemic, including informality, youth employment and technical and vocational education and training.

Multidimensional measurements of development: opportunities for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 3)

33. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Alicia Bárcena, presented the document *Development in transition: Concept and measurement proposal for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean*.<sup>3</sup> She recalled that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated economic and social vulnerabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean, a middle-income region with serious structural gaps. There was an urgent need to renew development cooperation, especially with regard to access to concessional financing in the face of shrinking fiscal space and high debt levels. She referred to the concept of development in transition—developed jointly by ECLAC, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union—an analytical framework for redefining the classification of countries according to their level of development, beyond per capita income, which would make it possible to measure middle-income traps and structural gaps and redirect cooperation to where it was most needed, as well as to renew the criteria for granting international development financing. A new classification was urgently needed, because in graduating from official development assistance (ODA), countries suffered direct and indirect financial and non-financial effects that went far beyond the loss of ODA. Development in transition conceived of development as a continuous, gradual, multidimensional and non-linear process. The concept of “graduation” should be replaced by that of “gradation” of development.

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<sup>3</sup> LC/TS.2021/95/REV.1.

34. She spoke of middle-income countries: diverse economies, with very different development challenges and needs, reflecting deep structural gaps. The economic and social impact of the pandemic had significantly widened the financing gap of these countries, which were also affected by productivity, social vulnerability, environmental and institutional traps. Despite limited fiscal space, the crisis caused by the pandemic had been met with unprecedented government responses in the region in 2020, without which poverty would have been much greater, and which should continue in 2021 to avoid a regression. However, spending and investment in environmental protection, green recovery and clean energy had fallen, and emergency measures had had a negative impact on the environment. In terms of financial flows to the region, private flows —foreign direct investment (FDI), remittances and portfolio flows— increased at the expense of ODA which had shown a declining trend, even though ODA was still much needed by many countries in the region. She further stressed that tax evasion and illicit flows were at the root of many of the problems of domestic resource mobilization and resolving that required international cooperation.

35. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC reiterated that a new international financial architecture was needed to respond to the emergency and promote development in the region; expand and redistribute liquidity so that middle-income countries could have access to diverse sources of international financing; discuss the restructuring and issuance of external debt, incorporating private creditors and considering the creation of a multilateral credit rating agency; include middle-income countries in debt relief initiatives and access to concessional and non-concessional liquidity; incorporate innovative instruments, such as hurricane clauses, green bonds and SDG bonds; capitalize and strengthen development banks at all levels; develop multilateral mechanisms for global tax implementation and the elimination of avoidance, evasion and illicit flows and, of course, rethink the system of cooperation based on a multidimensional measurement beyond per capita income. She highlighted the role of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs as a guide, as they offered a systemic and contextual vision of countries' development needs, and stressed the need to strengthen the regional integration of Latin America and the Caribbean and their common position in the framework of international cooperation.

36. In the discussion that followed, statements were made by Rita Hernández, Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, country serving as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC; Luis Pablo Rodríguez Mondal, Deputy Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, country serving as Chair of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries; María Elena Alcaraz, Coordinator of International Development Forums of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) of Mexico; Gladys Mutangadura, Senior Programme Officer of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and Ragnheiður Elín Árnadóttir, Director of the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

37. The Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, country serving as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, underscored the need to repair the development model, with a vision of international cooperation that would create spaces for dialogue between developed and developing countries, generating opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation in response to global challenges. International cooperation resources should be directed towards ensuring the well-being of all members of society and making a positive contribution to the environment and to climate change adaptation and mitigation. As the experience of Costa Rica demonstrated, new partnership instruments among countries and with the private sector could be the basis for future partnerships in South-South and triangular cooperation. The concept of development in transition emerged as a possibility for assessing countries' needs and strengths, and was a better reflection of reality than a traditional classification such as GDP. It was also necessary to reach regional consensus in

order to change the rhetoric and mainly the approach applied to countries classified as middle-income. Meetings such as the one being held, at which national views and experiences were presented, were the first step towards achieving a coherent and powerful discourse and being heard by the international community with concrete proposals and viable solutions.

38. The Deputy Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, country serving as Chair of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, stressed that that space had allowed the country to contribute to the global discussion on rethinking the multilateral architecture of support to developing countries. That architecture should be based on multidimensional criteria, including vulnerability and risk factors in the three dimensions of sustainable development —economic, social and environmental— valuing the prevention approach and the link between humanitarian action and peacebuilding. Middle-income countries needed to find mechanisms to avoid losing decades of development gains and a way to establish an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. They also required affordable financial access and debt relief to provide fiscal space to respond to the multifaceted crisis. The term “middle-income countries” was used to simplify the complexities of those countries, and the multilateral system had not provided an adequate response to their specific needs. He highlighted the solidarity of middle-income countries with developing countries, as reflected in the financial, technical, technology transfer and capacity-building support they provided through South-South and triangular cooperation projects and initiatives. Such cooperation had a major impact on countries, and increased participation could have a multiplier effect that could contribute to the achievement of objectives.

39. The Coordinator of International Development Forums of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) said that Mexico fully agreed with the need for a paradigm shift in the measurement of development and highlighted the proposal to discontinue the country graduation system and replace it with the concept of gradation. Countries’ annual per capita income alone presented a misleading picture of their development capacities, vulnerabilities and needs for more flexible and fairer financing. The pandemic had resulted in lags and widened gaps in the region, and reversing the losses required a more equitable and inclusive system of cooperation. Although the importance of equity in access to medicines, medical equipment and vaccines had been reiterated since the beginning of the pandemic, access to vaccines was uneven and many countries relied on direct assistance from other countries with surpluses, but solidarity and mutual support in the region had also been evident. The pandemic had created not only challenges but also opportunities to integrate the region and respond to common development needs and aspirations. Only through cooperation among countries and with other regions of the world would it be possible to move forward and build back better, inclusively, in solidarity and sustainably, leaving no one behind, to repair the damage caused by the pandemic and achieve the SDGs, and to meet the challenges of the present and the future.

40. The Senior Programme Officer of UN-OHRLLS said that considering multidimensional vulnerability was key as it could ensure a more balanced approach to eligibility for financing. Meanwhile, the excessively small pool of concessional financing was a challenge. UN-OHRLLS and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) had recently held technical and political consultations to assess the development and use of a multidimensional vulnerability index which should cover all Member States, focus on the vulnerability factors of all developing countries and reflect the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. OHRLLS would shortly release an assessment report of key findings from those consultations which could inform the related work in the region. Although achieving the right balance would be difficult, an imperfect index would be more comprehensive than an income-based approach. Distinguishing exogenous factors and addressing the data availability challenge were also crucial.

41. The Director of the OECD Development Centre said that the opportunity to rethink international cooperation in light of the COVID-19 crisis must not be missed and there was need of an initial discussion on how to update the criteria and toolbox for international cooperation. The OECD Development Centre and Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE), along with the European Commission and ECLAC, had joined forces with Latin American and Caribbean countries to adapt a well-being measurement framework to the region and determine how to include it in policymaking. Supporting societies and the economy amid ongoing uncertainty and mitigation of losses had to be matched with investing for better futures. Rethinking indicators was vital to advancing the development in transition narrative and reimagining international cooperation that included the countries of the region on an equal footing regardless of development level.

42. Next, the representative of Colombia said that in view of the difficulties of the graduation process, it was necessary to continue strengthening and professionalizing South-South cooperation, and to increase the number and quality of triangular cooperation projects. Colombia had identified the need for strategic partnerships to leverage available financial and human resources, and she mentioned a number of initiatives in that regard. There was also a need to prioritize engagement with international private actors, including philanthropic organizations, non-governmental organizations and the international business sector, and the management of the resources they provided, an area in which her country was making various efforts.

43. The representative of Paraguay said that her country agreed with the development in transition approach and the arguments presented, was aware of natural asymmetries and highly valued international development cooperation as a strategic pillar to support national development. For that reason, Paraguay had supported from the outset the process undertaken by countries to create the new narrative of international cooperation and to concretize new mechanisms, measures and tools for what could be considered a new era of international development cooperation. Although the country did not have an international cooperation agency, it was committed to strengthening the institutional framework and management in that area through various actions. Finally, she reaffirmed support for the regional positioning and requested time to carry out internal consultations and offer other contributions from her country.

44. The representative of Brazil commended the high quality of the document presented by ECLAC, *Development in transition: Concept and measurement proposal for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean*. However, he said out that no input had been sought from the member countries of the Commission for its preparation.<sup>4</sup> In his view, the ECLAC study was analytical or academic in nature, since the concepts and statements it contained had not been the subject of consultations with member countries and therefore could not compel governments to follow its proposals and suggestions. In any case, Brazil would study the report carefully and make additional comments after considering it. Among the concerns raised by the document were the possible practical implications of an apparent compartmentalization of Latin America in relation to developing countries in other regions; the lack of a multilaterally agreed definition of the concept of development in transition; and the fact that the concept had not been developed by the countries of the region, or with their needs in mind. His country was also concerned by the reinterpretation of the paradigms of international cooperation, which deviated from some of the basic principles of multilateralism, for example, with regard to respect for sovereignty, not setting conditionalities, and the affirmation of the horizontal nature that should characterize the multilateral relationship between countries, which was the basis of South-South cooperation. In that regard, he recalled the special communiqué on the promotion of a multidimensional approach for measuring countries' transition to sustainable development, issued in April 2021 on the occasion of the twenty-seventh Ibero- American Summit of Heads of State and Government, and noted that Brazil maintained the vision

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<sup>4</sup> See annex 2 for Brazil's full remarks.

on the matter expressed therein, which provided a good basis for a discussion with other countries. ECLAC had the conditions to mobilize specialized support to identify objective measurement criteria that went beyond per capita income, and its technical contributions could provide references and technical content to challenge the graduation criterion applied to official development assistance. Brazil recognized South-South and trilateral cooperation, which it would endeavour to foster, and the country would act with seriousness, solidarity and constructive purpose in the future in that discussion.

45. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica said the document being presented — *Development in transition: Concept and measurement proposal for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean*— had been prepared at the request of the Chair and that it would guide the discussion. It was a proposal that called for an enriching discussion among the countries. It was beneficial to continue building and advancing towards the same goal in a spirit of solidarity, so the countries were invited to make any contributions that could enhance the technical work performed and allow further progress on the discussions that the region needed.

46. The representative of Guyana thanked the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and her team for putting together a solid study. She said structural limitations of the development model had been further compounded by the COVID-19 crisis and Guyana remained convinced of the need for practical measures to alleviate developmental challenges facing the countries of the region. Decisions about development financing should be based on considerations of vulnerability and levels of resilience, especially with regard to climate change, and Guyana was supportive of the formulation and use of multidimensional measures of development to govern concessional financing decisions. Enhancing countries' capacity to respond to crises without bringing their development efforts to a halt was critical, and multidimensional measures of development were an essential part of that equation.

47. The representative of Chile said the document being presented was a contribution to the discussion, which included innovative concepts that encouraged reflection on many aspects of international development cooperation. The graduation process regarding official development assistance had been challenged early on by several countries. The need to reconceptualize the notion of development and rethink countries' graduation from development cooperation had emerged in various forums. The conceptualization and instruments of development needed to be adapted to the processes of change that societies were facing. The proposal to transform the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a regional conference was important; it should be a space for discussion to contribute to global governance of international cooperation, since it was vital to have a single voice with which to act in the spaces where that issue was discussed. The vision laid out in the ECLAC document represented significant progress and the reflection on development in transition did not appear antagonistic. Lastly, she stressed the importance of more democratic decisions on international cooperation.

48. The representative of Uruguay said that development cooperation needed to be rethought, moving towards models that would facilitate cooperation modalities for all developing countries, with a new narrative and a new paradigm, and progress on sources of financing to sustain that model. On the path to sustainable development, countries should not be penalized through abrupt withdrawals of traditional forms of financing. The way development was measured had to change, because the old criteria had become obsolete, as the pandemic had shown. It was imperative to have more comprehensive indicators to measure sustainable development, encompassing social, economic and environmental dimensions, and linking the areas included in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The criteria for allocating development cooperation should be based on a multidimensional vision, so that countries would receive support in accordance with their specific challenges and structural gaps. Multidimensionality and the search for

criteria for measuring sustainable development should continue to be addressed by the future conference, without neglecting South-South and triangular cooperation.

49. The representative of Peru said the discussion on cooperation provided space for a wider exchange of views and that it was legitimate to cover the full range of dimensions addressed in the document. The presentation had enabled a very enriching exchange, which had begun earlier, as the countries of the region had already been discussing concepts such as graduation and development in transition, as well as the need to move forward on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and on a multidimensional approach that went beyond the per capita income criterion to reflect each country's specificities. He expressed his appreciation for the presence of the representative of OECD and the way she had stressed the importance of political discussion and dialogue, which was central to cooperation. Lastly, he reiterated that the discussion on cooperation was a gateway to other issues, such as the financing for development agenda. International cooperation was only one dimension of that agenda, which should also be linked to investment, debt relief and trade.

50. The representative of Honduras said that middle-income countries faced a number of challenges to which measurement based on income alone could not be applied. Graduation exposed countries to setbacks in terms of development, so other more appropriate and effective instruments were needed to guide cooperation, and the Multidimensional Poverty Index should be the basis for measuring that transition towards development. The pandemic and the effects of climate change were the clearest demonstration of the threats faced by middle-income countries and the possible reversal of progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The crisis was a call for countries to work together on innovative proposals through the Committee on South-South Cooperation or the regional conference, as well as through South-South and triangular cooperation, to boost them further.

51. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC thanked the country representatives for their comments and said that the document being presented was intended to offer an analytical approach to existing visions for middle-income countries. South-South cooperation needed to be strengthened and the world needed to listen to the region's demand for equitable treatment in financing for development and cooperation, and from international financial institutions. Graduation criteria did not originate from the region, but did apply to the region. That was why Latin America and the Caribbean had to participate in the discussion, and ECLAC was available for this purpose. The regional conference, if established, would be the forum for moving forward with that discussion, drawing on countries' experiences, complemented by the analytical approach and discussions held with the OECD Development Centre and the European Union, where many of the cooperation partners were from. Lastly, she reiterated the readiness of ECLAC to receive countries' comments on the document and to listen to the different points of view so that they could all be taken into account.

Outcome of the twentieth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation of the United Nations (1–4 June 2021) (agenda item 4)

52. Under this agenda item, which was opened by Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, the country serving as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, statements were made by María del Carmen Squeff, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations and Chair of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (pre-recorded video message); Adel Abdellatif, Director a.i. of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC); Rita Hernández, Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, country serving as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC; and Manfred Haebig, Coordinator of the German Cooperation Programme (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)/Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany).

53. Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, expressed his satisfaction with the results of the previous day's meetings, which he said had been very productive and had included high-quality discussions, and hoped that the new session would also produce progress and allow for further examination of the topics of interest, based on the outcomes of the twentieth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation of the United Nations.

54. The Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations and Chair of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation referred to the issues that had been at the heart of discussions at the twentieth session of the United Nations High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, which was the main policymaking body for that type of cooperation at the global level: the multidimensional COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the follow-up to the consensus reached at BAPA+40. The key reflections that had emerged from the discussions included: recognition of the critical position of South-South and triangular cooperation in the field of development; the fact that, even in a challenging context, cooperation had continued, although cooperation among countries of the global South had been affected by the pandemic; and developing countries' need for financial and other facilities to achieve a solvent and equitable recovery, regardless of their income level. The Committee had called for equitable and affordable access to safe and effective vaccines, treatment, diagnosis and related health services through relevant mechanisms such as COVAX to accelerate the global recovery. There had been a call to move forward with multi-stakeholder partnerships—as coordinated work could broaden the scope of South-South and triangular cooperation—and to advance with monitoring and transparency mechanisms, and results-based analysis of contributions to make cooperation more effective. The entire United Nations system had facilitated the sharing of knowledge and technologies in developing countries, and the Committee considered that defining the overarching strategy of the United Nations on cooperation could have a positive impact, by integrating initiatives from all entities at all levels and simplifying South-South and triangular cooperation efforts. The Committee had also agreed that the follow-up to that strategy should be considered at its next session. The importance of stepping up cooperation of all stakeholders through United Nations mechanisms such as the Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDG Fund) had also been reiterated. Lastly, she stressed that, to achieve international cooperation that was aligned with developing countries' priorities and attainable for all, it was essential to work together with the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC.

55. The Director a.i. of UNOSSC spoke about the United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, which the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation had taken note of at its meeting in June 2021. He gave a synopsis of South-South cooperation in the Organization then described the evolution towards the inclusively developed strategy, which would allow for unprecedented tracking, follow-up and documentation of progress in South-South cooperation and would also improve reporting and advice to Member States. The strategy was divided into country, regional and global levels, with greatest focus on actions at country level, where there were most challenges in terms of documenting good practices and where efforts to mainstream South-South cooperation in development frameworks were concentrated. At regional and global levels, one of the key areas was knowledge-sharing—and Latin America could be commended for its longstanding support for South-South cooperation, reflected in more than 1,000 bilateral and regional initiatives in 2019 alone. The action plan of the strategy entailed five clear components to guide South-South cooperation, among which emphasis was given to building capacity in Member States. Given the importance attached to regional exchanges of experiences and partnerships, which had been lacking, Latin America could play a significant role in cooperation between regions by sharing its expertise. On the issue of resources, he said that despite initiatives already undertaken, there was a need for greater commitment on funding, particularly in the context of the response to COVID-19 in SIDS. The efforts undertaken in ECLAC could be replicated in other regions and he invited Costa Rica to take the lead in sharing the outcomes of the current meeting and collaborating with other regions. The outcome could also provide valuable input for UNOSSC, which was drafting its plan for the next four years.



56. The Director of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, country serving as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, said that international cooperation was a fundamental tool for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that had shown a historic commitment to South-South and triangular cooperation. At that time, the goal was to find innovative ways to leverage these forms of cooperation, in order to have the tools to inclusively provide quick and effective solutions, with solidarity, in a changing environment aggravated by the pandemic and natural disasters. South-South cooperation was a crucial element of international development cooperation, which called on developing countries to show greater solidarity, appreciate their specificities and complement each other in solidarity, but it was not a substitute for North-South cooperation. During the session of the High-level Committee, countries had called for increased cooperation contributions to end poverty, drive sustainable development, bolster South-South cooperation, increase the effectiveness of development operations in line with the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40), and strengthen triangular cooperation to pool experience and know-how. All these aims were shared by the Committee on South-South Cooperation, whose status needed to be upgraded to that of a conference. Only together, with a creative, integral, solidarity-based model such as South-South cooperation, would it be possible to move forward. The Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) had recognized the support of the United Nations development system, and that ECLAC and UNOSSC had always shown themselves to be allies of the region, channelling all the efforts of the system through cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Synergies with other regions and global institutions bolstered multilateralism and the shared vision of the countries of the global South to strengthen South-South cooperation, which was the starting point for achieving the shared goals of countries with similar characteristics. The 2030 Agenda was based on the same philosophy of development, collective action and solidarity. Lastly, there was a need for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

57. The Coordinator of the German Cooperation Programme (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)/Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany) delivered four messages. Firstly, he said the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted gaps in several areas, and the post-pandemic recovery offered an opportunity for structural change, driving a transformation towards more inclusive and sustainable development. Secondly, the system of international cooperation required innovation, and the development in transition agenda sought to foster dialogue in that regard, with a view to an independent system of international cooperation that went beyond development assistance. In the German cooperation programme, it was believed that development cooperation should continue to be renewed through global partnerships, as indicated in SDG 17. New approaches should strengthen institutional capacities, work inclusively with countries at all levels of development, facilitate partnerships through modalities such as triangular, South-South and multilateral cooperation —regardless of their recognition in terms of official development assistance— and change traditional development paradigms. Thirdly, German cooperation projects and modalities already contributed to these new approaches, and there were various ongoing initiatives. Over the next four years, efforts would focus on promoting partnerships and strategic use of triangular cooperation instruments. This overcame the traditional dichotomy of North-South cooperation and emphasized mutual learning and the complementary strengths of all partners. Innovation meant questioning oneself, and that also applied to development cooperation. Germany would continue to cooperate with middle-income countries for regional and global development. Future modes of cooperation needed to be discussed, to move towards a future that was shaped together.

58. The representative of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) said that it was clear that development cooperation was undergoing a process of transformation and that its rationale and concepts were changing. Traditional relationships had been challenged and the way of

working had tended to become more horizontal. These new modes had proved to be more effective in taking all parties into account. Spain considered that triangular cooperation was the best instrument for increasing accountability and benefits, maximizing results, developing capacities and creating a culture of working as a network, and that it was a prime example of the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the new conception of cooperation. In order to move towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda, AECID worked to enhance countries' capacities as cooperation agents, and excellent results had been achieved, as reflected by the region's leading position in the world in South-South and triangular cooperation. Spanish cooperation was working hard to ensure that cooperation projects continued to spread throughout the region.

59. The representative of Brazil said that regional commissions could play a role in supporting the framework presented, providing vital support in the promotion of triangular cooperation in the United Nations system, especially in the areas of research, data collection and capacity-building in public policies. Partnerships had been established within the last decade, but there was room for stronger linkages between UNOSSC and regional commissions in the implementation of UNOSSC initiatives. Brazil, a long-time supporter of triangular cooperation through United Nations agencies, renewed its commitment to engage with ECLAC and UNOSSC in any activities identified in the areas mentioned.

60. The representative of Paraguay reaffirmed the importance of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and said that, as agreed in the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40), Member States should continue to participate in inclusive and transparent consultations during the Committee's regular sessions, to further enhance South-South and triangular cooperation. Paraguay recognized the importance of the experience acquired over the preceding 40 years through South-South cooperation, as well as the progress achieved in areas such as social protection, innovation and the fight against poverty, but also recalled that there were pending challenges in crucial sectors that hindered countries' efforts to achieve the desired goals. The aim was therefore to continue strengthening partnerships, in the conviction that international cooperation for development was the best means of finding joint solutions.

61. The representative of Cuba said that the United Nations system's efforts to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation as a means of implementing the 2030 Agenda were starting to produce tangible results, and that the system's joint strategy on this issue was a key step towards improving coordination, addressing the pandemic and achieving the SDGs. She then gave two examples of Cuba's cooperation in the region: firstly, Cuba had provided support to Haiti at the time of the earthquake and had been able to assist the population and, secondly, Cuba already had two vaccines in use and three candidate vaccines that would soon receive final approval, which might be interesting information for the Committee. These scientific advances and cooperative actions entailed an enormous effort for the country, owing to the blockade imposed by the United States, which was the main obstacle to its development. Lastly, she conveyed the country's satisfaction with the proposal from the secretariat to strengthen the Committee's mandate by converting it into a conference, thus enabling it to contribute to improved follow-up of cooperation issues at the international level, promoting policy coherence and placing the demands and challenges of the countries of the region at the centre of international discussions.

#### Adoption of agreements (agenda item 6)

62. At their tenth meeting, the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation adopted the agreements that figure in annex 1.

Dialogue of ministers of foreign affairs on opportunities and challenges of international development cooperation in the context of the health, economic and social recovery post-COVID-19 (agenda item 5)

63. The dialogue of ministers of foreign affairs was moderated by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and the participants were Hugo Rivera, Vice-Minister of Economic Affairs and International Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic; E. Paul Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda, country serving as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS); Ramon Cervantes, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration of Belize; Carlos Ramiro Martínez, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, country serving as Chair of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries; Leslie Campbell, State Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica; Felipe Solá, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina; Erika Mouynes, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama; and Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

64. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the dialogue of ministers of foreign affairs was an opportunity for policy reflection by the region's cooperation authorities. ECLAC had spoken about a paradox of the recovery, as some countries in the region were close to economic recovery, but this was not going to alleviate poverty, extreme poverty, unemployment or informality. The growth that had been recorded was driven by domestic demand—resulting from emergency transfers—and by increased exports, tied to higher commodity prices rather than volume growth. The region was facing several challenges, including more acute global asymmetries, which called for greater integration and synergies through regional integration mechanisms and South-South cooperation. Unequal access to vaccines was an example of that situation. There was also an asymmetry in wealth, as developed countries had become richer while developing countries had become poorer. The asymmetry on climate change was reflected in the suffering of SIDS and Central American countries, with no clear funding mechanisms for climate change adaptation. Also, wide-reaching recovery plans were being formulated in developed countries, while in the countries of the region these were not yet in place, which was detrimental to investment. In the region, great fiscal efforts had been made, but fiscal space was shrinking, and debt was increasing, so external financing was essential and had to be equitable and independent of income levels. Renewed cooperation was needed, and the recommended regional conference on South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean would make a valuable contribution in that regard, as the United Nations wanted to hear from regional and international cooperation stakeholders.

65. The Vice-Minister of Economic Affairs and International Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic said that the pandemic had caught the region off guard and that Caribbean SIDS had been hit hard by the impact on tourism. The Dominican Republic had been a recipient of South-South cooperation. Exports and remittances had increased and multisectoral civil society partnerships had supported the government. A total of 10 million doses had been administered under the country's vaccination plan, with 80% to 90% of the population vaccinated. The question of what would happen to the economy remained, as well as how public expenditures in the region would be financed, and how it would be possible to protect against and finance damage from natural phenomena; South-South cooperation could provide responses to those challenges. Cooperation was increasingly important, as were effective and creative instruments of cooperation. The Dominican Republic shared an island with Haiti, a country that needed the helping hand of the countries of the region through cooperation. The Latin American and Caribbean region was prosperous, dynamic and strong enough to face adversity, but it needed to act with greater unity than ever before, by enhancing regional integration capabilities, to forge ahead along a path of transformative recovery.

66. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda, country serving as Chair of AOSIS, said international development cooperation had to evolve beyond traditional forms to promote the convergence of developing countries to higher levels of income and well-being and to support developing countries' efforts to provide universal basic standards to their citizens and to participate actively in the provision of international public goods. Recovery from the pandemic was possible through international development cooperation combined with pursuit of the SDGs if premised on urgent access to vaccines for all, fiscal space for COVID-19 response and recovery, identification and tackling of inequality, transfer of technology and closing of the digital divide, advancement of the climate agenda, leveraging of input from people and global youth involvement. Smart recovery had to directly influence international development cooperation that gave the nations of the world the opportunity to rebuild better and avoid replicating the unsustainable practices of the past.

67. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration of Belize said the COVID-19 pandemic was a critical juncture that underscored the need to re-evaluate previously held orthodoxies in international cooperation in order to remain relevant in rapidly changing circumstances. In Belize, challenges included sustaining the development gains made previously despite a substantial cooperation agenda and an unsustainable debt burden that threatened those gains. The G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative should be expanded to include all stakeholders and continue beyond 2021. Ultimately, the meeting would be deemed successful if it led to the formulation of extraordinary solutions for the extraordinary problems faced. That entailed linking the insights of the development in transition, middle-income trap and structural gap approaches—providing a useful tool to reorganize international cooperation to make it effective—and the insights shared by the participants.

68. The Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, country serving as Chair of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, said that South-South cooperation was a significant complement to international development cooperation, but not a substitute for it. Middle-income countries played an important dual role as providers and recipients, reflected in financial, technical, technology transfer and capacity-building support. The proposed transformation of the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a conference could contribute to positive changes, to bring the discussion to the countries, to greater knowledge-sharing and to the formation of partnerships. In the context of the pandemic, he reiterated the importance of universal access to vaccines, which should be treated as global public goods, and referred to the Statement on universal and equitable access to vaccines for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). He also highlighted statements by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC on the need for the United Nations development system to improve its cooperation with middle-income countries in all their diversity. The region had the technical and technological capabilities to become a successful example of promoting South-South and triangular cooperation to the world.

69. The State Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Jamaica said the Committee on South-South Cooperation and ECLAC must prioritize concrete action to meet the challenges and opportunities for international development cooperation post-COVID-19. Middle-income developing countries must continue to advocate for multidimensional measurements of development to be mainstreamed into long-term development financing for countries of the region. The middle-income trap must be addressed by shifting the policy focus of international development cooperation from poor countries to poor people. The pandemic had provided objectives for expanding South-South cooperation by exposing vulnerabilities in key social sectors. The institutional framework and mechanisms for South-South cooperation among countries of the region had to ensure strengthened partnerships for green,

equitable and resilient development beyond the pandemic. Lastly, South-South cooperation had to be reoriented to a more people-centric and inclusive approach.

70. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, in a pre-recorded video message, said that the development cooperation strategy could not overlook the situation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had coincided with a lack of funding and international cooperation resources. Bolder and more comprehensive funding actions were needed. Argentina had made progress on international cooperation with various United Nations agencies and regional entities, as well as bilaterally in numerous efforts related to combating the pandemic. Countries in the region should work together for an equitable and sustainable recovery. Most of the countries were middle-income and faced constraints in accessing cooperation. Argentina therefore welcomed the work of ECLAC in supporting countries in areas such as access to vaccines, combating climate change and access to financing for development. He also highlighted the Comprehensive Plan for Health Self-Sufficiency that the Executive Secretary of ECLAC had presented at the twenty-first meeting of foreign ministers of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). He expressed his country's support for the Plan, as well as for the initiative to transform the Committee on South-South Cooperation into a regional conference, which would strengthen its institutional framework and capacity for action. Lastly, he said that his country, as Chair of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, was at the full disposal of ECLAC to work in this area.

71. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama said, in a pre-recorded video message, that the pandemic posed multiple challenges and its effects were numerous and multidimensional. Integration and multilateralism were effective tools for obtaining international cooperation assistance, sharing experiences and finding solutions in the social, economic and environmental spheres. Multilateral bodies had a leading role in that, and South-South and triangular cooperation were effective tools for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Women continued to suffer discrimination in access to work and decision-making in the public, private and rural sectors, and it was therefore necessary to pursue public policies that addressed the needs of women and girls. On the environmental front, Panama was moving towards decarbonization and building climate resilience, and had called for a regional climate governance partnership. Measures had been taken in education and technology, and access to medicines had improved. Social protection programmes were also geared towards the inclusion of indigenous peoples. She concluded by saying that international cooperation remained a crucial foreign policy tool in the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Closing session**

72. In closing, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC recalled that, as had been stated at the meeting, no one could be saved on their own. The help of all was needed, so it was important to include all countries in all forums regardless of their income level. International cooperation was based on countries' development problems, respecting sovereignty and recognizing their national strategies, but being flexible in order to respond to uncertainties. There was a need to ensure access to concessional finance and other financing instruments for all, regardless of income, particularly for the smaller economies. It was also important to develop a set of multidimensional development indicators, a task to which the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC could contribute. Asymmetries in areas such as climate change, debt and financing called for resilience-building and more and better multilateralism. The regional conference on South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean would be a space to go beyond the orthodoxy of cooperation and build a new paradigm for a more sustainable and more egalitarian recovery. It would also be linked to global cooperation strategies and would contribute to the fulfilment of the mandates of the second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40), which were being renewed in the context of a pandemic. She concluded by thanking Costa Rica for its leadership as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC.

73. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, highlighted the convening function of the meeting and the importance of the dialogue held and the consensus reached, which responded to the mandates of resolution 749(XXXVIII), adopted at the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC. He expressed his special appreciation to ECLAC and the leadership of its Executive Secretary and her team. The region faced the challenge of developing strategies that would promote a greater commitment to international cooperation based on the new reality of the pandemic, in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth. Collective and solidarity-based work was needed to alleviate the vulnerabilities of countries, especially SIDS. A new way of measuring countries' development was needed for cooperation to have a positive impact. He thanked ECLAC for preparing the document *Development in transition: Concept and measurement proposal for renewed cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean*. The future regional conference on South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean would be a forum for decisive and coordinated work to address the needs of member countries. It was possible to develop strategies to promote productivity and inclusive, holistic, green and resilient growth, capable of responding to emerging needs. Finally, he noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs should continue to guide collective efforts and that the conversion of the Committee on South-South Cooperation into the regional conference on South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean was a fundamental step towards consolidating South-South and triangular cooperation.

## Annex 1

**AGREEMENTS**

*At its extraordinary meeting, held virtually on 19 and 20 August 2021, in fulfilment of resolution 749(XXXVIII) adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-eighth session, the Committee on South-South Cooperation agreed to:*

1. *Take note* of the document “From the Committee on South-South Cooperation to the regional conference: opportunities for renewed international development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Note by the secretariat”;<sup>1</sup>
2. *Recommend* that the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean:
  - (a) Approve the renaming of the Committee on South-South Cooperation as the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean;
  - (b) Decide that the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean shall prioritize the implementation of the mandates conferred on United Nations regional commissions in the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation,<sup>2</sup> which was endorsed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in resolution 749(XXXVIII) adopted at its thirty-eighth session, held in October 2020, and shall carry out its activities within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup> and General Assembly resolution 75/234 on South-South cooperation;
  - (c) Agree that the regular sessions of the conference be held every two years at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, in alternating years to the sessions of ECLAC, using installed capacity and within existing resources;
3. *Request* the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to submit these recommendations for consideration by the countries at the thirty-sixth session of the Committee of the Whole, to be held in November 2021;
4. *Thank* the Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for organizing the extraordinary meeting, and participants for their contributions to the discussions on strengthening the Commission’s cooperation bodies and on multidimensional measures of development, the dialogue of ministers of foreign affairs on opportunities and challenges of international development cooperation in the context of the health, economic and social recovery post-COVID-19, and the outcome of the twentieth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation of the United Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> LC/RECSS.2021/3/Rev.1.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 73/291.

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.

## Annex 2

Statement by Brazil<sup>1</sup>

Nº 06

A Embaixada da República Federativa do Brasil cumprimenta atenciosamente Comissão Econômica para a América Latina e Caribe - Secretaria Executiva – e tem a honra de transcrever o texto da fala do Brasil a propósito do item 3 do temário da Reunião Extraordinária do Comitê de Cooperação Sul-Sul, ocorrida em 19 a 20 de agosto de 2021:

“La circulación del estudio sobre el concepto de ‘desarrollo en transición’ apenas una semana antes de la Reunión Extraordinaria no brindó tiempo suficiente para consultas internas en el ámbito del Gobierno brasileño.

Inicialmente, considero fundamental señalar que Brasil ha implementado su política de cooperación internacional en total sintonía con el espíritu de solidaridad y horizontalidad que guía los intercambios entre los países de América Latina y el Caribe en el campo de la promoción del desarrollo socioeconómico. En esta agenda de intercambio, la cooperación Sur-Sur y trilateral concebida y conducida por nuestros países ha mostrado utilidad, vitalidad, diversidad y resultados positivos. Brasil cree que el Comité de Cooperación Sur-Sur, y su eventual sucesor, la Conferencia Regional de Cooperación Sur-Sur, son instancias que deben mantener ese propósito principal.

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<sup>1</sup> This note is reproduced in the language in which it was given. A courtesy translation by the secretariat follows.



Brasil entiende que el estudio de la CEPAL debe ser interpretado, dada sus calidades, como de carácter exclusivamente analítico o académico, ya que los conceptos y declaraciones contenidas en el mismo no fueron objeto de consultas ante los gobiernos de los países miembros y, debido a eso, no pueden comprometerlos. Brasil tiene inquietudes con las posibles implicaciones prácticas de la aparente compartimentación de América Latina frente a otros países y regiones en desarrollo que podrían interpretarse a partir de la lectura del estudio de la CEPAL. La ausencia de una definición consensuada multilateral del concepto de 'desarrollo en transición' es evidente cuando no la encontramos en las principales resoluciones de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas que abordan el tema del desarrollo.

Hay que recordar, además, que el concepto de 'desarrollo en transición' no fue elaborado por los países de América Latina y el Caribe, tampoco teniendo como referencia a nuestras propias necesidades. Se trata de una idea concebida al otro lado del Atlántico, que refleja visiones del mundo a partir de otras realidades.

Los elementos controvertidos asociados a la propia origen de este concepto se vuelven aún más preocupantes para la soberanía de los países de la región cuando se le han relacionado otras ideas, nuevamente de origen exógeno, a ejemplo de "bienes públicos globales" que no cuentan con reconocimiento en foros multilaterales ni aceptación pacífica y amplia en cuanto a su contenido o alcance, la supuesta necesidad de formular, en América Latina, un 'nuevo pacto social', y la aplicación del concepto de 'ciudadanía global'. A su vez, vemos la proposición de una nivelación entre actores públicos y no públicos,

como la hipótesis de debilitamiento de la capacidad de coordinación política e institucional de los gobiernos de los países de la región en sus esfuerzos de desarrollo económico y social según sus propias prioridades soberanas.

Así, Brasil se preocupa con este ejercicio de reinterpretación de los paradigmas de la cooperación internacional, que se desvían de los principios básicos del multilateralismo, a ejemplo del respeto a la soberanía de los países, a la no imposición de condicionalidades y a la horizontalidad, que también están en la base de la cooperación Sur-Sur.

Brasil ha mostrado interés en participar en cualquier debate que permita identificar estrategias concretas que permitan a los países de América Latina y el Caribe mantener su acceso a los flujos de cooperación internacional. Lo hacemos de nuevo en consonancia con nuestro compromiso con la solidaridad continental.

Precisamente, Brasil recuerda y favorece el contenido del 'Comunicación Especial sobre la Promoción de un Enfoque Multidimensional para Medir la Transición del Desarrollo Sostenible en los Países', aprobada por los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la mitad de los países miembros de la CEPAL reunidos en la XXVII Cumbre Iberoamericana de Andorra celebrada el pasado mes de abril.

En este Comunicado se destacó, y cito, 'la importancia de continuar el diálogo entre los Estados miembros e interlocutores relevantes de la cooperación internacional sobre el concepto de 'desarrollo en transición' complementario a la división categórica por nivel de ingreso per cápita, a fin de

avanzar de manera conjunta en bases voluntarias, y de acuerdo con los compromisos asumidos por la comunidad internacional en conferencias multilaterales respecto de los criterios de medición, asignación de la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo y los instrumentos idóneos para acompañar a los países que así lo deseen en su transición al desarrollo sostenible; instando a la revisión del sistema de clasificación y el proceso de graduación de los países que se identifican como de renta media, para superar ese paradigma restringido que entiende el desarrollo únicamente en términos de crecimiento económico`. Fin de citación. Este sigue siendo el entendimiento de Brasil en esta materia.

Finalmente, Brasil hace un alerta muy importante para nosotros: considera que el enfoque que se está aplicando al concepto de "desarrollo en transición" puede alejar la Comisión de su función primordial de identificar y promover acciones prácticas para la expansión de la cooperación Sur-Sur y trilateral en la región. Ese es el foco, repito, de las actividades de la Comisión, en cualquiera de sus instancias, tal como establece sus decisiones hasta aquí y tal como establece el Documento Final de la PABA+40, que todos aquí representados adoptamos, por aclamación, en Buenos Aires, en 2019.

En ese sentido, consideramos que la CEPAL podría movilizar apoyo especializado a sus países miembros para la identificación de criterios objetivos de medición para allá de la renta `per capita`, considerado el carácter multidimensional del desarrollo y las brechas estructurales al progreso social y económico de la América Latina y el Caribe. La contribución técnica de la CEPAL podría proporcionar referencia y contenido técnico y material al discurso reiterado de cuestionamiento del actual criterio de graduación aplicado

en la Ayuda Oficial al Desarrollo, asimismo servir de subsidio para la planificación de la cooperación Sur-Sur y trilateral donde, como sabemos, y específicamente en la cooperación Sur-Sur, no se aplican criterios de graduación. Lo repito: entre nosotros no aplicamos criterios de graduación, y no somos países diferentes. Somos nosotros mismos, miembros de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe de Naciones Unidas.

Y más: no podemos olvidar de las fuentes de financiación para la región, o sea, a los países y grupos privados que nos envían AOD y IED. Es tarea grande. Cuenten con Brasil. Pero no cuenten con Brasil para menospreciar la cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular.”

A Embaixada da República Federativa do Brasil aproveita a oportunidade para renovar à Comissão Econômica para a América Latina e Caribe - Secretaria Executiva – a expressão de sua mais alta estima e consideração.

Santiago, 24 de setembro de 2021.

PMM



**COURTESY TRANSLATION PROVIDED  
BY THE SECRETARIAT**

“No. 6

The Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil presents its sincere compliments to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Executive Secretary and has the honour to transcribe the statement by Brazil in reference to item 3 of the agenda of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, held from 19–20 August 2021:

‘The circulation of the document on the concept of “development in transition” barely one week before the extraordinary meeting did not allow the Government of Brazil enough time for internal consultations.

First, I believe it is fundamental to note that Brazil has implemented its international cooperation policy in full harmony with the spirit of solidarity and horizontality that guides the exchanges between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the promotion of socioeconomic development. In this agenda of exchange, the South-South and trilateral cooperation conceived and implemented by our countries has reflected usefulness, vitality, diversity and positive results. Brazil believes that the Committee on South-South Cooperation, and its eventual successor, the regional conference on South-South cooperation, are forums that should maintain this primary purpose.

Brazil understands that the ECLAC document should be interpreted, given its qualities, as exclusively analytical or academic in nature, since the concepts and statements it contains were not the subject of consultations with the governments of the member countries and, therefore, cannot be considered commitments. Brazil has concerns about the possible practical implications of an apparent compartmentalization of Latin America in relation to other developing countries and regions that could be interpreted from the reading of the ECLAC document. The lack of a multilaterally agreed definition of the concept of “development in transition” is evident when it is not found in the major resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations relating to development.

It should also be noted that the concept of “development in transition” was not developed by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, or with their needs in mind. It is an idea that was formulated on the other side of the Atlantic, reflecting visions of the world based on other realities.

The controversial elements associated with the very origin of this concept are even more worrying for the sovereignty of the countries of the region when they have been linked to other ideas, also exogenous, such as “global public goods” that are neither recognized in multilateral forums nor peacefully and broadly accepted with respect to their content or scope, the alleged need to formulate, in Latin America, a “new social compact”, and the implementation of the concept of “global citizenship”. We see the proposal to equalize public and non-public actors as the assumption of the weakening of the political and institutional coordination capacity of governments of the region in their economic and social development efforts according to their own sovereign priorities.

Thus, Brazil is concerned by the reinterpretation of the paradigms of international cooperation, which deviate from the basic principles of multilateralism, for example, with regard to respect for sovereignty, not setting conditionalities and horizontality, which are also the basis of South-South cooperation.

Brazil has shown interest in participating in any discussion to identify concrete strategies that would allow the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to maintain their access to international cooperation flows. We do so again in line with our commitment to continental solidarity.

Specifically, Brazil recalls and favours the content of the special communiqué on the promotion of a multidimensional approach for measuring countries' transition to sustainable development, approved by the Heads of State and Government of half the member countries of ECLAC on the occasion of the twenty- seventh Ibero-American Summit held in Andorra in April 2021.

This communiqué stressed, and I quote: “the importance of continuing the dialogue among member States and relevant international cooperation partners on the concept of “development in transition” complementary to the categorical division by per capita income, with a view to moving forward together on a voluntary basis, and in accordance with the commitments made by the international community at multilateral conferences regarding the criteria for measurement, allocation of international development cooperation and suitable instruments to accompany countries that wish to do so in their transition to sustainable development; urging the revision of the classification system and the graduation process of countries that identify themselves as middle-income, in order to overcome this restricted paradigm that understands development only in terms of economic growth.” End of quote. This continues to be Brazil's understanding in this matter.

Finally, Brazil raises a very important alarm: it believes that the approach being applied to the concept of “development in transition” could lead the Commission away from its primary function of identifying and promoting practical actions for the expansion of South-South and trilateral cooperation in the region. That is the focus, I repeat, of the activities of the Commission, in all of its bodies, as established in its decisions up to now and as established in the outcome document of BAPA+40, which all of us represented here adopted, by acclamation, in Buenos Aires in 2019.

In that regard, we consider that ECLAC could mobilize specialized support to its member countries to identify objective measurement criteria beyond per capita income, considering the multidimensional character of development and the structural obstacles to social and economic progress in Latin America and the Caribbean. The technical contribution of ECLAC could provide references and technical content and material for the repeated discourse of challenging the current graduation criteria applied to official development assistance, and contribute to planning South-South and trilateral cooperation where, as we know, and specifically with regard to South-South cooperation, graduation criteria are not applied. I repeat, we do not apply graduation criteria among ourselves, and we are not different countries. We are members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Moreover, we cannot forget the sources of financing for the region, that is, the countries and private groups that send us ODA and FDI. It is a big task. Count on Brazil. But do not count on Brazil to undervalue South-South and triangular cooperation.'

The Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil avails itself of the opportunity to reiterate to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Executive Secretary the assurances of its highest esteem and consideration.

Santiago, 24 September 2021”

### Annex 3

## LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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